The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock

**Overview** – This assignment is essentially trying to get you to focus in on the importance of the synecdochal moment – that is, the importance of the part to the whole. You will be given a choice of quotes from ―Prufrock-- and what you’ll basically be doing is dissecting them: explaining why *those* words were chosen above all other words, why *that* word order (or repetition) is significant, what *that* figure of speech implies, and **how these parts all relate to the whole of the poem**. You will, in short, be examining the whole through the ―keyhole of one part.

**Directions**:

1. From the list below, choose a significant quote from ―Prufrock.‖
2. In your brainstorming, ask (and answer) questions such as the following:

Why that word? \* Why that image?

Why that word order? \* What tone or emotion does this evoke?

Most of all, what does this moment reveal about Prufrock? Does it make me sympathize with him? Pity him? Be frustrated with him? Understand him?

1. **You will be answering two major questions in your paper:**

What does this moment reveal about the soul and self of J.Alfred Prufrock?

What is the message Prufrock is delivering to us through the words of this poem?

1. Organize your thoughts into a coherent pattern. Address the quote chronologically – that is, in the order of the words.
2. Make sure you explain the overall ―picture‖ of the poem for the reader. What happens before your quote? What happens after? Where are we in our ―journey‖ with Prufrock? Though you will be focusing most of your time analyzing the specific quote you have been given, you absolutely must ―locate‖ the quote in the poem, giving us a sense of where it fits into the poem as a whole. Please look at how this is done in the example below.
3. Spend most of your paragraph in analysis, bringing out the ideas you developed during brainstorming.

**Choice of Quotations from “Prufrock”**

1. In the room the women come and go Talking of Michelangelo.
2. There will be time, there will be time

To prepare a face to meet the faces that you meet;

There will be time to murder and create,

And time for all the works and days of hands

That lift and drop a question on your plate…

1. Time for you and time for me.

And time yet for a hundred indecisions,

And for a hundred visions and revisions,

Before the taking of a toast and tea.

1. For I have known them all already, known them all:

Have known the evenings, mornings, afternoons,

I have measured out my life with coffee spoons…

1. Shall I say, I have gone at dusk through narrow streets

And watched the smoke that rises from the pipes

Of lonely men in shirt-sleeves, leaning out of windows? . . .